

Prabuddha Bharata

वसिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राण्य वराशिबोधत ।

Katha Upa, I, iii, 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

[*Translated from Bengali.*]

XIV.

[Place :—*The rented Math at Belur.*

Time : 1898 A. D.

Subject : *The installation of Sri Ramakrishna on the site of the new Math.]*

To-day Swamiji is to perform a sacrifice and install Sri Ramakrishna on the site of the new Math. The disciple has been staying at the Math since the night before, with a view to witnessing the installation ceremony.

In the morning Swamiji had his bath in the Ganges and entered the worship-room. Then taking the worshipper's seat he took in both his palms at the same time all the flowers and Bilva leaves that were there in the flower-tray, offered them at the consecrated Pádúká (slippers) of Sri Ramakrishna and fell to meditation—a superb

spectacle! The gentle and beaming radiance of his person aglow with the lustre of religion, filled the chapel with a sort of wonderful luminosity, as it were! Swamis Premananda and others stood at the chapel-door.

Meditation and worship over, preparations were now made for going to the new Math premises. Swamiji himself took on his right shoulder the ashes of Sri Ramakrishna's body preserved in a copper casket, and led the van. The disciple in company of the other Saunyasins brought up the rear. The banks of the Ganges

resounded with the music of bells and conchs and the river seemed to dance on in joyous symphony. On his way Swamiji said to the disciple, "Thakur had said to me, 'Wherever you will take me on your shoulders, there I will go and stay, be it under a tree or in a hut.' It is therefore that I am myself carrying him on my shoulders to the new Math grounds. Know it for certain that Thakur will keep his seat fixed there, for the welfare of the many (बहुजनहिताय), for a long time to come."

Disciple.— When was it that Thakur said this to you?

Swamiji.— (Pointing to the Sadhus of the Math) Did'nt you hear from them?— It was at the Cossipur garden.

Disciple.— I see. It was on this occasion, I suppose, that the split took place between Thakur's Sannyasin and householder disciples regarding the privilege of serving him?

Swamiji.— Yes, but not exactly a 'split,'—it was only a misunderstanding, that's all. Rest assured that among those that are Thakur's devotees, that have *truly* obtained his grace, there is no sect or schism, there *cannot* be,—be they householders or Sannyasins. As to that kind of slight misunderstanding, do you know what it was due to? Well, each devotee colours Sri Ramakrishna in the light of his own understanding and each forms his own idea of him from his peculiar standpoint. He was, as it were, a great Sun, and each one of us is eyeing him, as it were, through a different kind of coloured glass, and coming to look upon that one Sun as parti-coloured. Of course, it is quite true that this leads to schism in course of time. But then, such schisms rarely occur in the lifetime of those who are fortunate enough to have

come in direct contact with an Avatara. The effulgence of that Personality, who takes pleasure only in his Self, dazzles their eyes, and sweeps away pride, egotism, and narrow-mindedness from their minds. Consequently they find no opportunity to create sects and party factions. They are content to offer Him their heart's worship, each in his own fashion.

Disciple.— Sir, do the devotees of the Avatara, then, view Him differently notwithstanding their knowing Him to be God, and does this lead the succeeding generations of their followers to limit themselves within narrow bounds and form various little sects?

Swamiji.— Quite so. Hence sects are bound to form in course of time. Look, for instance, how the followers of Chaitanya Deva have been divided into two or three hundred sects; and those of Jesus hold thousands of creeds. But all those sects without exception follow Chaitanya Deva and Jesus and none else.

Disciple.— Then, perhaps, Sri Ramakrishna's followers, too, will be divided in course of time into lots of sects?

Swamiji.— Well, of course. But then this Math that we are building will harmonise all creeds, all standpoints. Just as Thakur held highly liberal views, this Math, too, will be a centre for propagating similar ideas. The blaze of universal harmony that will shoot forth from here will flood the whole world.

While all this talk was going on, the party reached the Math premises. Swamiji took the casket down from his shoulder, placed it on the carpet spread on the ground and bowed before it touching the ground with his forehead. Others too followed suit.

Then Swamiji again sat for worship. After going through the Puja he lighted the sacrificial fire, made oblations to it, and himself cooking Páyasa (milk-rice with sugar) with the help of his brother-disciples, offered it to Sri Ramakrishna. Probably also he initiated certain householders on the spot that day. All this ceremony being done, Swamiji cordially addressed the assembled gentlemen and said, "Pray to-day all of you to the holy feet of Sri Ramakrishna, with your body, mind and speech, that the great Avatara of this cycle that He is, He may, for the welfare of the many, and for the happiness of the many—बहुजनहिताय बहुजन-सुखाय—reside in this holy spot from this day for a great length of time, and ever continue to make it the unique centre of harmony amongst all religions." Everyone prayed like that with folded palms. Swamiji next called the disciple and said, "None of us (Sannyasins) have any longer the right to take back this casket of Thakur, for we have installed him here to-day. It behoves on you, therefore, to take it on your head back (to Nilambar Babu's garden)." Seeing that the disciple hesitated to touch the casket Swamiji said: "No fear, touch it, you have my order." The disciple gladly obeyed Swamiji's injunction, lifted the casket on his head, and moved on, thinking himself blessed to have got the privilege of touching it through the Guru's command. The disciple went first, next came Swamiji, and the rest followed. Swamiji said to the disciple on the way, "Thakur has to-day climbed on your head and is blessing you. Take care, never let your mind think of anything transitory, from this day forth." Before crossing a small bridge, Swamiji

again said to him, "Beware, now, you must move very cautiously."

Thus all safely reached the Math and rejoiced. Swamiji now entered into a conversation with the disciple, in the course of which he said, "Though the will of Sri Ramakrishna, his Dharmakshetra—sanctified spot—has been established to-day. A twelve years' anxiety is off my head. Do you know what I am thinking of at this moment?—This math will be a centre of learning and spiritual discipline. Householders of a virtuous turn like yourselves will build houses on the surrounding land and live there, and Sannyasins, men of renunciation, will live in the centre, while on that plot of land on the south of the Math, buildings will be erected for English and American disciples to live in. How do you like this idea?

Disciple.—Sir, it is indeed a wonderful fancy of yours.

Swamiji.— A fancy do you call it? Not at all, everything will come about in time. I am but laying the foundation. There will be lots of further developments in future. Some portion of it I shall live to work out. And I shall infuse into you fellows various ideas, which you will work out in future. It will not do merely to listen to great principles. You must apply them in the practical field, turn them into constant practice. What will be the good of cramming the high-sounding dicta of the scriptures? You have first to grasp the teachings of the Shastras, and then to work them out in practical life. Do you follow me? This is called practical religion.

(To be continued.)

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

MAN wants to reach unto God. He cannot always rest satisfied with this shallow and puny cribbled and confined existence of his, the life which he has been leading since human life first dawned on earth. He must rise and struggle and seek out the way. But does he always know the meaning of his life, the thing that he wants, the thing that will satisfy all the yearnings and mad hankerings of his soul? And so, past the days of nature-apotheosis and all other primitive kinds of worship, to his systems he goes, the priests and the community, the Rabbis and the synagogues. But he is not always very successful in his choice. Time was when he could accommodate himself very acquiescently to any ready-made conception of God and rest satisfied thereby. But now he has his reason to provide for. His intellect has pointed out to him the necessity of knowing God and at first, the cravings of his intellect he must satisfy along with his feelings through a reasoned conception of the God he knows, the God he sees. He has not yet faith enough altogether to renounce his rationalistic tendencies, so he touches the hem of the garment of a supernatural and supra-intellectual God. All that he sought for once in the dim dark alleys of his forest home in the by-gone ages, he must seek to find out now in the gas-lit cross-ways of the busy thoroughfares of the civilised world. But still he has hardly any chance of faring better in his quest than very often to fall either into the class-grip or the community-grip or failing these, to develop into a crass and self-sufficient rationalist

with the most desperate religious views.

One is apt to forget that there is a better way of looking at things and that is mainly in the way of the kind of *relation* which one wants to establish between his soul and the Oversoul of the universe. He has only tried for a *relation* in the established ecclesiastical manner, with all their grim array of theories and nicely determined divisions of credal codes to the exclusion of that life-touch, which is of the very essence of religion itself. So let him try otherwise now. He has simply tried to nurture his soul on the husks of an ecclesiastical dogma while the grain was all stored up in front of him, quite untouched. The prime question to determine in the matter is—are these mere external accretions the faith of man constituted in its total aspect? Why not try to get at the kernel of the matter? What is the life that speaks forth through these? The community might take the outer excrescences to be the cream of that very life itself which first gave meaning to them all, but truth shall surely not bear these. The sage thus perverted by misrepresentation, would, if he were alive once more, burn with righteous indignation and try to reinstate the God-consciousness that belonged to him in its full glory once more for the bewildered gaze and consideration of his, in a sense, apostate followers. For do they not know, the sages of the world, who lived the true life, the value and significance of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds or for the matter of that, the hair-splitting discussions of the scholastics, the Naiyaikas

and Mimansakas of the world for the realisation of the true soul of man?

Reduced into one central and pivotal truth—it is but the belief in human personality that is the bed-rock of the churches of the world.—The personality of a sage, a master, a God-man, an Avatara in fact, howsoever they are expressed and in whatsoever a manner. And what is their aim?—they want to raise and restore the human mind to the Ideal. The multitude only live for them; they are mere abandoned preys to the Ideal. When they come into contact with these mighty hearts palpitating with the throb of the Great Divine, they are electrified. They find the way, the truth and the life. And that is how men seek for God, but then what of God Himself? The fact is, it is God seeking for men as much as men seeking for God. Although hence also come the diversity of creeds, the multifariousness of sects, the formation of castes, the corporation of bodies—we make God after our own image, according as the light reveals unto us. The Absolute is there no doubt but it is the relative, the temporal, and the local that very often triumph over the universal and fasten upon the passing phases of these, the many diverging foci of looking at the Absolute, its agreement of the total whole. All the differences of outlook in social and in religious matters also arise from this. It is that *relational* aspect of the Absolute which so long as human minds are differently constituted and differently worked there must remain—disparities in social customs, faith and mode of worship as well. But the look-out of humanity should for ever be that these do not grow so dense as to mystify the face of the Real Truth itself.

The God-man knows this fact more than anybody else, more than you and I do. We are so apt to confound things. They do not confound—they point out the way strongly, sternly. They can rise above the differences, so only they meet their companion-souls on earth. And then they break not, but fulfil. And that should be our index of judging them and us as well in their light, namely—Life.

Only very often the past history of the world takes us aback by the number of lapses in the reverse manner of the human kind. Blood has been shed more copiously for the upholding of matters of faith than in any other cause,—and this more in the West and hardly much in the East, here, with the result that while the East has progressed most favourably with spiritual culture and spiritual enlightenment, the West has lagged behind for centuries, with a mere short oasis of *Sadhana* in the midst of the dark and the modern ages of Europe, with the inauguration of which latter came in all the most blood-curdling strifes of the Christendom. Now it is the Crusades and now again it is the Protestant and Roman Catholic splits, culminating in the treaty of Westphalia, a treaty of its kind which is unknown to the Hindu civilisation of India, where spirituality reached its acme centuries before the historical era. Religion, to the Semitic-Hebrew conception, was of a naively realistic kind and hence the paramountcy of the Khalifas of faith with sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, while in the other phase of it the Hebrew mind always in the look-out for a sign and a wonder—a Messiah coming with God-given gifts in his hand to save the one only chosen nation of his—a theory which may

succeed well with the apocalyptic vision of a heaven on earth, rather than with the word of God and word made flesh of the evangelical John. Jesus came to these Hebrews again, but he did not receive the recognition his due, for did he not say that his kingdom was not of this earth, but of heaven only and that the kingdom of heaven was within himself? And so to the wall he must go—this God-man on earth; his thaumaturgy was not sufficient for the wonder-agape Hebrew mind at large.

But Jesus the Christ had another chance. This time the Semitic-Hebrew allied itself with the speculative genius of the Aryan people, the Teutonic group especially. The true Aryan speculative power being not with them, we find many new interpretations, analogies and elaborations, polemics and exegetics. The church gave theories to explain the man but the man himself was forgot, buried in the ruins and rehabilitations of ruins of theories on the structure that he supplied to the world with his life. The phenomenon is not a new one altogether in the history of the religions of the world. The outer trappings serve their purpose only so long as they emphasise and further the needs of the realisation of the Ideal. That period over, only the differences exist while the Truth languishes beyond the pale of the ecclesiastical cloisters. It cries out of the dust heap for a resurrection. Will men pay heed to it?

Theology no doubt serves a good purpose but the question of all questions is—what purpose should it serve? Is it mere quibbling on the regard that we pay to the teacher, or is it incorporating ourselves with him in very fact? The same-

ness of vision is the birthright of the Saint who has realised his divine nature in full. How far have we progressed up to that? If we have not, then certainly no Jesus, no Buddha, no Sri Krishna for us. And yet we cannot say not no to any one of these, for we believe in men—in ourselves, and they are by consensus of spiritual opinion the greatest men of their kind. If one wants to be *relational* with them—for to be relational with them means the finding out of our true nature—has he got nothing to do but to seek out the differences betwixt the tweedledum and the tweedledee? The forgetful missionary is the dread upas-tree to all existing spiritual culture. He can get together a sect but he often-times forgets the Fact of the sect. The fact of Christ, we all know, is greater than the missionary fact about him.

Undoubtedly the rationalist has his own faults also. He abhors the niceties of the metaphysical and theological arguments but only to pin his faith on another and even greater superstition sometimes, namely, his own positive notions which might very well be called the 'realism of the eye,' while the idol of the exclusively theological mind is the 'realism of the brain.' But none of these are sufficient to give us a true glimpse of the Truth as it is in itself. It is for this that we have to cultivate the true Aryan notion of the 'Realism of the soul,'—which M. Arnold has mistakenly called a mere metaphysical genius, derived from his study of the Teutonic specimens of intellect—the supreme God-vision, which is possible for living men even. And that explains really a great deal—'the God-vision on earth'—it is just the thing for all humanity to ponder over with rapt attention and

gather the force of it within them. Is God-vision really possible? Yes, in greater and even greater measures. The men that have the greater are the Gods-incarnate on earth.

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This God-vision may belong to the superhuman orders of existence but humanity is not concerned with them in any direct way. And if they cannot be outside the human sphere, they cannot very well be anything totally beyond the human reason to grasp, and yet they must exist. Or else no relation is possible between the mundane and the supra-mundane worlds save only for a *Jnani*, but a true *Jnani* has the sense of Divine oneness unchecked with him, in a *continuum*, so he can dispose of it in the best manner. The mind of man runs along ransacking all through the gamuts of all the human and divine possibilities till at last, in its eagerness to seize upon the vision concretised—for that is a very necessary and psychological consequence of the inner nature of man—it lights upon the God-man conception, the 'Avatara' of the Hindu thought. And so it is seen that it is a man they are seeking for, after all their pains, nay, a very life, identifying himself with their highest impulses and yet in a mysterious way further ennobling them, etherealising them, giving them the wished-for turn towards the Absolute conception. Yes, his is the coming down for the lifting up—the middle-term between God and man, a Christ, a Krishna, a Buddha, a Chaitanya, a Ramakrishna, one and all, but never the definitive, the empirical man standing for the Christ-soul, the Krishna-soul, or the Buddha-soul. The Avatara links the man with the god; his function is not a mere part of it, but the whole of it. Were he to appropriate the worship of his adherents

as man himself, divested of the consciousness of his oneness with the Divine Godhead, he were a traitor, a blaspheming fallen soul. He is divine and can the divine quarrel with his many manifestations on the earth? The test of the Avatara lies in the strength of his persuasion to be perfect all of us, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. We offer worship to him but he offers worship to us all as well for he can and does recognise the divinity within us. The one begotten son is only the figment of clerical imagination. Truth always triumphs, not man-made but divine, and on the high Sinai-peak of the mental and spiritual elevation of all humanity stands a figure, august and serene but surpassingly bright, in whom the many facets of the God-men on earth are seen reflected in a gorgeous play of light and shade—the body of the Soul eternal, so figured, difficult to differentiate or to say deliberately, dogmatically, which surpasses, the one or the other.

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Thus, the life of an Avatara is nothing but the life superlative on earth. If spiritual uplift be the highest end and aim of human existence, then surely are these Avatars the highest fruits of human endeavour after the divine. But that is only speaking from our standpoint. If man makes the image of God, God hastens to return the same compliment to him and these are His appointed souls, -parts and parcel in His existence, not like the Leibnitzian monads, but in Him and of Him, in an organic conception of God, who answers to the devout prayers of the human heart, the Father in Heaven of the Christian theology. All the endeavours of our mind should be to find a relation with these God-men on earth, provided we understand the need and necessity for the same.

Or it might be as Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said, and we have before indicated, "he who can register his name at the head-office,"—that is, can easily relate himself to the Absolute, "need not bother to send in his name at the branch-offices," that is, relate himself to those whom we call the Incarnations of God. The average humanity has always his doubts and his waverings which the priests and ecclesiastics can hardly explain to satisfaction. In these crucial periods of his existence, he feels the need of the hand of God to descend upon him, to give him a lift out of the slough of despair and put him on to the way of the eternal city—the perfection of the human souls. And God is ever ready to meet these hopeless ones of the universe. To touch His feet for once, in His human shape, is to dispel the ignorance of ages at once, not like the unbelieving miracle-mongers of old or the dogmatically clamouring ones for the name of a man or a sect, or even like the positivistic rationalist, moving in his own narrow groove, but like the mighty victor is his march on earth now, a long triumphal procession, while the captives of the eye and the intellect rend the skies with their wailings and weepings and gnash of teeth, in the wake of his chariot-wheels. It is this Life personified that we must henceforth learn to recognise in the history of the world before we seek to consummate the highest we are capable of, in our own lives, for, there lies the objective test of our spiritual strength, to recognise greatness in others. The path of the Jnani is not strewn with roses and once if the ideal slips from his vision he is lost and very often irretrievably and inextricably lost, but the Bhakta who always holds by his symbol, goes always by the path of his soul-experience, not so easily liable to fall

and he becomes in time a living witness of the living God—and there lets his soul abide for ever.

And that is how, incidentally, we have traced the attitude of the Hindu mind towards these Incarnations of God, all through the history of this nation. He knows an Avatara instinctively where other nations only hum and haw and speak of the standardization of religious values, in an exclusive sense. The Hindu worships Jesus Christ not because he is the only begotten son of God, in the orthodox sense, but because he recognises in Christ, a twin-soul with him in the path of his highest endeavour. And we have the testimony of the greatest religious saint of modern India, who realised the Christ-spirit as one with him, to adduce as the truth of our assertion. The historical fact of Christ-life even is not a bugbear to the Hindu mind. The fact is not unimportant because the idea is there, for that is his method of viewing the history, the history of the spiritual India.—This word *idea* again, in this context being also of a very broad and comprehensive significance, for it embraces both the highest as well as the next lower aspect of it. For it is not only the God-sense that speaks through an Incarnation but also in the visioning forth his transcendent consciousness, his explanation, very often unconscious to the popular mind, of the historical, the phenomenal, the *Vyāvahārika*, surrounding of his life. Christ is the supreme explanation of the life in Palestine of his time and so were Buddha and Sri Chaitanya, Sankara and Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

He of whom we speak, though last, is not the least among this bright band of

India's greatest sages and God-men. The breadth of his spiritual culture and the depth of his consciousness of the Absolute so far surpasses the acquisitions of many another in other epochs of the history of India and not only that, in the history of the world in fact, that humanity is well-nigh astounded to find that he stands so far above the well-known categories of his thought and judgment. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a Hindu and an Advaitist, nay, he was a Christian of Christians, a Mahometan of Mahometans, at once a Shakta and a Vaishnava, the Advaitist losing himself in the highest spiritual *Jnanam*, as well as the Bhakta, in raptures over the attributes of his Divine Master. Not only these again but he was perfectly at home, a *Siddha-purusha*, a past-master in many other forms of spiritual culture in vogue among the Hindus for generations past. And all this in the course of one short and single life of his. It has been very aptly said that in his life of fifty-one years he lived eight thousand years of the national spiritual life.

Marvellous man! He it is who sums up in himself the keynote of the whole spiritual culture of the Hindu nation, past and present as also the future to a very great extent, and no denying that! The proofs of it are evident all about us to-day. He is the living synthesis of the great religions of the world, not in the way of a mere subtle intellectual statement thereof but in the surest and grandest way of living the life of them all. This poor, solitary, uneducated and even '*unmannered*' man, born in a way-side village and employed as an ordinary priest, on a very shabby pittance, in the temple of an aristocrat—he, the poor, illiterate Brahmin, clad in the simplest and living in the

most '*squalid*' manner, speaking the tongue of the common village-folk, he, to work wonders and revolutionize altogether the history of human spiritual culture!—the most prodigious efforts of mental concentration that human eyes have ever been called upon to witness. And the fact lies there to-day, it lies on the knees not of the gods alone but of all men, of all countries. He that hath eyes to see let him see. He that hath ears to hear let him hear. The light of *sadhana* that was once lit on the bank of the Holy Ganges, in the temple of Dakshinewar, has now to be turned not only towards the homes of the Indians themselves but towards the west and the east, the north and the south, everywhere, so that all will bathe and partake of their share in the full floods of this superb Illumination. Swami Vivekananda, the mighty disciple of this mighty teacher, has made his Guru's name revered in the countries of the West to-day. The East has opened her doors and have we not seen the first batch of the new pilgrims ashore already? Do we not see them even now, while out, in the distance, the red war is stamping its feet and nations feeling the shock of it coming in wistfully to drink of this celestial fountain India's living inspiration?

The life has been lived and the Word has been spoken, even more deeply than ever before. Where are they now, that shall testify to it, that shall speak of it, not in subdued whispers of dull and dubious thought but in words that shall sear and burn the materialistic conscience of our modern civilisation and bring back its lost self-consciousness home once more?

SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

(BY A DEVOTEE.)

Of all the soul-forces which have worked in human society for the uplift of man, none have been so potent and far-reaching in their effects than those which have come to us on the wings of love, peace and emotion. True, these forces are silent, imperceptible in their operations like the action of physical forces, such as the course of the planets in their orbits,—selfless, unwearied, poised in bliss, still they work powerful upheavals in human society and are perceived in their cumulative effects bridging over a long span of time. Such have been the effects of messages of love and emotion, such the work of the Evangel of Peace. Feeling, sentiment is all relegated to a subordinate, nay, inferior position in most modern schools of thought and is sought to be weeded out like a poisonous weed.

But is it necessary for the highest intellect to be incompatible with feeling? The life of Sri Ramakrishna offers a wonderful key to its solution and throws a flood of light upon it. Here was a life lived in which one sees the highest and boldest reasoning playing side by side with the tenderest emotion. Things are carried to the extremest conclusions to which they are capable, even though in the mind following in their wake, all cherished preconceptions have to be given up and all the old chords of the heart have to snap, all past associations have to go, all is relentlessly torn off by the sheer force of Vichára. When he wanted to demonstrate to himself that he was the Self, why should he be bound by *Máya* relations, feel more nearly related to his worldly relations than to

others and thus accept by the mind the association of his body and birth, we have it in his life, that he used to regard them as dry deep wells in which he would fall and never be able to get out and that in their presence he used to feel choked for breath. Who had greater penetration and insight than he to see the working out of the One Lord in the diverse religions and sects and to discover the unity by which the manifold was threaded? Those who have lived with him in everyday life know and attest how he searched and sifted everything before acceptal, and everything was weighed before the conclusion was come to. There was nothing perfunctory and slipshod even in his little actions, but they were guided by a uniform standard. During the period of his Sadhana in the Vedanta, his mind was caught in the swing of his philosophic reasoning which enjoined renunciation of all phenomenal experience and rose to such a height of transcendentalism, that his biographer records, for six months he was immersed within its profound depths and lost all consciousness of the external.

Even after that period when the transcendental consciousness had become established in him and he had assumed the normal human Vyavaháric consciousness, the upward flow of his mind was so powerful, that any slight or remote suggestion was sufficient to precipitate it into the depths of Samadhi. This superconscious mood was so insistent that in order to induce the normal human consciousness, he had to repeat with great deal of emphasis some ordinary human desire

like "I shall have this thing or that," grasping which his mind descended into the external consciousness. To one who has risen to such a height of abstraction, the ordinary values of life must necessarily be lost, and he will not feel the same interest in the persons and things of the world, or in causes which loom so large in our mental vision.

Then opens the most pleasing episode of his life, the days of his sweet ministry, the days of a thousand services of love, the days which cannot be recalled without a thrill of emotion. The little band of young men whom he had seen as chosen by his Divine Mother to come to him for his religious ministry had now gathered round him, and all that intense love and devotion he had felt before for the Mother Kali now welled up and flowed in a thousand streams to these his children of the spirit. Mother never felt for his son so deeply, nor friend for friend, none ever felt so sweetly for his beloved as he felt for them. His love was distilled from the love of all. All that the poets have painted in the highest flights to which the wings of their imagination would carry them, sinks into insignificance and pales into nothingness before the love of his relationship with his spiritual children. And what unfathomable purity! The very sight of some of them used to plunge him in Samadhi in nearness of God. As he used to say, "I see Narayana in them!" This he used to feel for all, and would go to any lengths to be of some service to people, even when every word he spoke meant agony to him. "I would give a thousand lives to be of service to one man," he exclaimed. Well might he, for in the crowning realisation of his life he was wont to say, "It is He who has become all this. Many years ago, Vaishnav-charan had said that when one believed in

Narailā—realised the Lord playing as man, his knowledge had become perfect. Now I see it is true, every word of it."

This brings us round to the point from which we started, that head and heart must join in holy alliance and that intellect must be wedded to emotion. This is the wonderful religion of head and heart which Swami Vivekananda preached, and of which his master was the most perfect object-lesson: to realise the oneness, the solidarity of man which Vedanta declared ages ago and which science also is demonstrating to-day, and to love and worship and serve everything as manifestation of the One Lord of the Universe. Thus there will be room for an infinite development of intellect and an infinite development of feeling. This is the type of character of which the life of Sri Ramakrishna offers us the model to mould our lives upon. Not only is the joining of head and heart necessary, but imperative. For intellect without the chastening influence of feeling is a highly explosive individual and social ingredient and is apt to involve the man or social body in which it thrives in ruin. Intellect revolves on the pivot of "I" or the self and its tendency is to gather everything from everywhere round one centre, to foster that particular point at the expense of all others. A powerful intellect needs to be balanced by strong sympathies, otherwise it is apt to develop into a Superman or Social Anarch dominating over their fellowmen; for every bit of that power has been garnered for the glorification of the "I" and is now employed for self-aggrandisement, to satisfy the greed for gain or lust for power. The crash of ruin which is sounding in our ears in the world-war is due partly to that. Intellect has been cultivated, sciences have been discovered, the few have made

slaves of the many, and consequently there has been no expansion of heart, which has been confined within narrow limits, or allowed to run into little ruts.

The Indian Ideal has been one diametrically opposed to this. The poet Kalidasa in describing the character of the King Dilipa paints the type of manhood adored even in a Kshatriya in these words: "Even endowed with knowledge he was reticent, with the possession of power there was no abuse, in charity no self-advertisement, he had the pairs of opposite qualities in such exquisite balance, that

they appeared to be blossomed together. Verily has the Creator created him with noble elements; for all the endowments of his head and heart were for the good and welfare of others." "There is abundance of power but all is held in perfect control, not under the sway of self; like a wide ocean with all its waters calmed, and not allowed to break into tumults or waves.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna with its rich endowment of the qualities of head and heart is thus the working out and embodiment of the characteristic Indian ideal.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION TO THE WEST.

(BY BRAHMACHARI GURUDAS.)

(Concluded from page 67)

IN the West renunciation was hardly even mentioned, much less practised. And the word had held little or no meaning to us, till we met the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission. In Swamiji's life and teaching renunciation was the great theme. "Hate this world," he said, "it is a mire. Cultivate love for the spiritual life." And he quoted: "Not by wealth, not by progeny, but by renunciation alone the goal is reached." "Stand up for God," he said, "let the world go. Have no compromise. Give up the world, then alone you will be free."

What a contrast with the teaching prevalent in the West at that time,—the teaching of health, wealth and prosperity, that sad aberration of the spiritual ideal that was gaining a footing in the West in those days! "God is good; we are His children; so let us enjoy the good things of this world," was the rising religion in America.

These false ideas the Swami had to correct. He had to root them out. And he did it

with a will. "You people in the West, have enjoyed enough," he said in California. "Now go to the jungle, dig a hole and meditate. Spit on this world, if you want God." And he took some of his students and they lived and camped in the woods. "Now," he said, "imagine that you are Yogis, living in the Indian forest. Forget your cities, forget everything. Think only of God. See," he said, pointing to a stream, flowing near by, "here is Mother Ganges." And they lighted the Dhuni and sat around it and he taught them how to meditate and to make Japam. And facing the stream he would shout: Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom! Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom! until that sound vibrated in every mind and the world was forgotten and the soul soared into regions unknown before.

And those of you who knew Swamiji, knew how charming was his personality, how full of fun and wit he was. To camp out with him was a constant delight to his disciples. What wealth of stories he would relate to them

during moonlight evenings, around the camp-fire, under the beautiful pine-trees of California. During these stories India would live before the mental eye of the students.

And so through hours of seriousness and through hours of innocent enjoyment, the students were drawn towards God. And in their hearts was lighted the fire of renunciation. It seemed all so easy, so joyous, so free from effort. But in later years the student realised what miracle had been wrought within their hearts.

There is a sect in America that teaches that because Jesus healed the sick, to use one's mental power for healing diseases is the true mission in life. And then came Swamiji and he told them the story of his own master, how during an illness one of his followers had suggested that he heal himself through his own mental efforts. The master had listened. But later he said: "How mean to take one's mind away from Mother to direct it towards this filthy body?" And Swamiji concluded with the startling remark: "Jesus would have been greater, had he not used his powers."

To some of his hearers, especially to hide-bound church members, such remarks were shocking and "they understood not the sayings which he spoke unto them." But those who were really sincere, "kept all these sayings in their hearts." To these there was food for thought. And the very startling effect of the words helped them to lift their minds out of the old rut of thinking.

Swamiji was a man of many moods and to judge him by one of these moods, or by one single saying, was not doing him justice. Only those who were with him much could get a glimpse of his many-sided nature. For example, one day he placed Christ after Buddha in regard to greatness as a man. And some Christians did not like it. But had they had a little patience, they would have heard how on another occasion he said of Jesus that he was an Incarnation of God. "And these great Incarnations," he added, "are untouched

by aught of earth. They assume our form and our limitations for a time, in order to teach us. But in reality they are never limited, they are ever free."

I remember how one afternoon I came to the Vedanta Society in New York with a large picture of Jesus in my hand. The Swami asked me what I had there. I told him that it was a picture of Christ talking to the rich young man. "Oh, let me see it," he said, eagerly. I handed him the picture. And never shall I forget the tenderness in his look when he held the picture and looked at it. At last he returned it to me, with the simple words: "How great was Jesus!" And I could not help thinking that there was something in common between these two souls.

The doctrine of sin and eternal hell-fire is one of the doctrines on which orthodox Christian preachers love to harp. Man is born in sin, his nature is sinful. It is only through the grace of God that man can be saved. Now, Swamiji used to hold question classes in New York. And every one was invited to ask any question he wished. So one evening, an old church-lady asked him why he never spoke of sin. There came a look of surprise on Swamiji's face. "But, madam," he said, "blessed are my sins. Through sin I have learned virtue. It is my sins, as much as my virtues that have made me what I am to-day. And now I am the preacher of virtue. Why do you dwell on the weak side of man's nature? Don't you know that the greatest blackguard often has some virtue that is wanting in the saint? There is only one power and that power manifest both as good and as evil. God and the devil are the same river with the water flowing in opposite directions."

The lady was horrified, but others understood. And then the Swami began to speak of the divinity that resides in every man; how the soul is perfect, eternal and immortal; the Atman resides in every being. And he

quoted from the Gita: "Him the sword cannot cut, Him the fire cannot burn, Him the water cannot wet, nor can the wind dry up the Atman. Eternal, all-pervading, immortal is the soul of man."

For you who are born in India, it must be difficult to realise what all this meant to us in the West,—to us, who had chafed all our lives under the terrible doctrines of the church; that man is an impotent, miserable creature, at the mercy of a whimsical, autocratic God,—the sword of damnation always hanging over one's head, bond-slaves at the mercy of a Potentate to save or damn as He pleases.

Then came the strength-giving words of the Upanishads: "Brahman alone is real; everything else is unreal, and the human soul is that Brahman, not different from it." Here, was hope, here was strength, every man can become divine, by realising his own divinity. Do you see what an immense consolation Swamiji's teaching was to those who had searched but had not yet found, those who had knocked but unto whom it had not yet been opened? To them, Swamiji came as a Saviour. He came to the door of their own hearts and knocked. And blessed are they who opened the door to receive the flow of benediction that came with his presence.

I will not attempt to tell you what Swamiji's mission was in other directions, what he has done for the land of his birth by waking up his own countrymen; in presenting India to the world in her true garb; in removing stupid and wrong impressions we in the West had about the Hindus; in placing India where she belongs in the intellectual and spiritual world,—suffice it for me to give you my impressions of his mission in the West, as the bearer of light and wisdom, as the consoler of the heart, as the friend, the guide, the teacher of a nation groping in spiritual darkness.

Not long ago I was asked, by a friend of mine, to state in a few words what was the

mission of Swami Vivekananda. You know, people love to throw bombshells and see them explode. My friend was evidently expecting such an explosion. But I am afraid he was disappointed. In the first place, I do not believe in pigeonholing men like Swamiji. It is utter silliness to attempt and express his mission in one sentence. And then, in the second place, I was not prepared for the question. So, though the question acted somewhat like a bombshell on my brain, I must confess that the explosion was rather feeble. And my friend was evidently disappointed. I replied rather hesitatingly that Swamiji came to enlighten the world. "To enlighten the world?" he said scornfully, "we have light enough. Swamiji came to make *men*." I could not deny it, for at once flashed through my mind Swamiji's own words: "My religion is a man-making religion."

Now I think that both these answers are typical, the one expressing the Swami's mission to the East, the other his mission to the West. Yes, my friend was right, you *have* light abundant here in India. Your scriptures are like the shining sun that dispels the darkness of ages. But remember, that sun was shining very dimly even in your own land, until Swamiji removed the intervening clouds. You had turned your back towards the light and you were looking at your own shadow. It was Swamiji who told you to turn around and face the light. Your gaze was directed Westward; from the West you expected light and help and inspiration, until Swamiji made it clear to you that not by imitating Western life could India be raised, but by turning towards your own scriptures, by studying the culture of your own beloved motherland, you would become *men*.

And as my friend remarked that there is light enough in India, that India needed men, so I might have retorted, taking the Western viewpoint, that the West has plenty of men, that we needed light,

But are these the men that Swamiji wanted? Yes, muscles of iron and nerves of steel there may be. A good deal of brain even. Swamiji would not have told us that playing football we would be better able to understand the Gita. Strength there is, indomitable will-power, perseverance, courage, integrity. Who shall deny it? But was that all that Swamiji wanted of a man? Brute-force we find abundant in the West. But how is that force applied? Is it used as a medium to elevate us above the brute creation? Has it made us *real* men? That is the question.

Do we use that strength as a foundation on which to raise a noble, refined character, as a basis on which the higher, the moral, the spiritual man takes his stand? Swamiji wanted *men*, but not brutes. He wanted men, the highest product of evolution, man, the master of his lower nature, the king of creation.

And what did Swamiji mean by strength? "Strength, strength, I have only taught strength," he exclaimed when questioned about his work. But what kind of strength? Do you remember how he would repeat again and again Sri Krishna's admonition to Arjuna, when the latter in a moment of mental confusion, dropped bow and arrow and sank down in his chariot, overcome by grief? "Whence this weakness?" exclaims Lord Krishna. "At critical moments to fall back and shrink from one's duty is mean. It does not befit thee, Arjuna. Remember, you are an Aryan. Stand up and quit thee like a man."

Swamiji wanted that kind of strength, strength that leads to the conscientious performance of our Dharma, be it in social functions or in a life of withdrawal from worldly affairs. Renunciation must be the backbone of our life in the world, as well as in solitude. In the West we had enough of worldly activity. So in London Swamiji told his disciples: "What the world wants to-day, is twenty men and women, who can dare to stand in the street yonder and say that they possess

nothing but God! What the world wants, is character, men of burning, selfless love. Remember, man is the highest being that exists, *man is God*. But that man must be pure and strong and selfless and stripped of worldly ambitions."

"One great theme," so writes a friend to me from California, "one great theme was carried through all the Swami's teachings. And that was the necessity for spiritual self-reliance. 'Religion is for the strong!' he shouted again and again. 'Be brave, be strong, be fearless. Once you have taken up the spiritual life, fight as long as there is any life in you. Even though you know that you are going to be killed, fight till you *are* killed. Don't die of fright. *Die fighting*. Don't go down, till you are knocked down.'

"Then, with his right hand extended, he thundered: 'Die game! Die game! Die game!' These were his farewell words to his disciples in California, his goodbye."

That is what Swamiji wanted of his *men*. The demand was high, but he could not be satisfied with anything less.

Renunciation was Swamiji's badge. It is true, in the West he had often to accept a life of luxury. But his friends knew that his inner soul was always at the feet of his master; that to him he looked for inspiration, that from him he received the command.

This burning love for God and the Truth, his absolute selflessness, his love and sympathy for the high and the low alike, are what made Swamiji so dear to his Western disciples. They felt instinctively that it was his own heart that spoke, when he quoted an ancient Rishi: "Hear ye children of immortal bliss! Even ye, that dwell in higher spheres! For I have found that ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. And knowing Him, ye also shall be saved from death."

And then Swamiji departed. He left for distant shores. But his voice seemed to linger behind. And in hours of solitude, when the heart felt sad and longed for one look, for one

word from the beloved, but departed master, that voice seemed to speak and whisper: "Go within; all knowledge is there. Hearest thou not? In thine own heart, day and night, is singing that Eternal music, Satchidananda, Sivoham, Sivoham."

And now, as we look back and reflect what heritage the Swami Vivekananda has left to the West, we would point first of all to those who were his disciples, those living monuments, chiselled by his own hands, men and women, always ready to testify to the debt they owe to their master; we could point to the *men* and *women* he has made, men and women, ready to live and die for him. We would point to the lives he has changed, to those whom he has brought to the feet of his divine master. We would point to his brother Sannyasins now spreading his message in different parts of America.

And then we would point to that encyclopedia of spiritual information, his lectures, which are now printed and widely circulated all over the world, scriptures through which his voice may still be heard, through which his spirit is still working, scriptures to which for ages to come, East and West alike, will look for light and guidance.

And lastly we would point to a quiet place of retreat in the sunny hills of California, the Shanti Ashrama, our first Ashrama in America. Swamiji did not go there himself, but he sent one of his beloved brother monks, to teach us how to live the life.

And now, if you ask what made the Swami Vivekananda so wonderfully successful in the West, we would answer that it was his eloquence, the logic of his arguments, his wonderful personality and his spotless life. It was the combination of heart and intellect that made Swamiji the power that he was.

His mission to the West, I take it, was to give to the Christians a higher interpretation of their own scriptures, to give to unbelievers a sound foundation for serious investigation, to guide the scientific mind into channels of higher research, to point out to Western nations the danger of a materialistic civilisation and to show to all men and women the way, how to realise their own divinity. And this he did by placing before us and by explaining to us, the treasures of the Vedas.

And in fulfilling this mission the Swami Vivekananda has placed all Western nations under eternal obligation to India.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

CXXXIII.

(*Original.*)

20th May, 1894.

Dear —

I am in receipt of your letter and am glad to learn that S— is all right. Now I tell you a curious fact. Whenever any one of you is sick, let him himself or any one of you *visualize* him in your mind and mentally say and strongly imagine that he is all right. That *will cure him quick*. You can do it even without his knowledge and even with thousands of miles between. Remember it and do not be *ill* any more. * * *

I cannot understand why — be so miserable on account of his daughter's marriage. After all he is going to drag his daughters through the dirty Samsāra which *he* wants to escape!!! I can have but one opinion on that—condemnation! I hate the very name of *marriage* either in a boy or a girl. Do you mean to say that I will have to help in getting some one in *bondage*? If my brother M— marries I will throw him off from me. I am very decided about it.

So far so good bye for the present.

Yours V.

CXXXIV.

(Original)

[Written to Rao Bahadur Narasimha Chariar.]

Chicago,
23rd June, 1894.

Dear Sir,

Your kindness to me makes me venture to take a little advantage of it. Mrs. P. is the chief lady of the United States. She was the lady President of the World's Fair. She is much interested in raising the women of the world and is at the head of a big organisation for women. She is a particular friend of Lady Dufferin and has been entertained by the Royalties of Europe on account of her wealth and position. She has been very kind to me in this country. Now she is going to make a tour in China, Japan, Siam and India. Of course she will be entertained by the Governors and other high people in India. But she is particularly anxious to see our society apart from English official aid. I have on many occasions told her about your noble efforts in raising the Indian women, of your wonderful College in Mysore. I think it is our duty to show a little hospitality to such personages from America in return for their kindness to our countrymen who came here. I hope she will find a warm reception at your hands and be helped to see a little of our women as they are. And I assure you she is no missionary, nor Christian even as to that. She wants to work apart from all religions to ameliorate the condition of women all over the world. This would also be helping me a great deal in this country.

May the Lord bless you.

Yours for ever and ever

Affectionate

Vivekananda.

CXXXV.

(Translated from Bengali.)

Baltimore, U. S. A.
23rd October, 1894.

Dear—

Glad to receive your letter and go through the contents. I received to-day a letter of A— from London, which also gives me some information.

* * * *

Now you have come to know your own powers.—Strike the iron while it is hot. Idleness won't do. Throw overboard all idea of jealousy and egotism, once for all. Come on to the practical field with tremendous energy; to work, in the fulness of strength! As to the rest, the Lord will point out the way. The whole world will be deluged by a tidal wave. Work, work, work,—let this be your motto. I cannot see anything else. There is no end of work here—I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will find its way, there it will fructify—*अद्य वाद्वशतान्ते वा*—be it to-day, or in a hundred years. You must work in sympathy with all, then only it will lead to quick results.

* * Our object is to do good to the world, and not the trumpeting of our own names. Why doesn't N— learn Pali, in Ceylon, and study Buddhist books? I cannot make out what good will come of aimless rambling. * * Those that have come under his protection, have Virtue, Wealth, Desires and Freedom lying at their feet. *मायैः मायैः*—courage! Everything will come about by degrees. From all of you I want this that you must discard for ever self-aggrandisement, faction-mongering and jealousy. You must be all-forbearing, like Mother Earth. If you can achieve this, the world will be at your feet.

* * Try to give less of material food in the anniversary celebrations, and give some food for the brain instead. * *

Vivekananda.

VIVEKACHUDĀMANI

(Continued from page 69.)

श्रद्धाभक्तिध्यानयोगान्मुमुक्षो-
मुक्तैर्हन्त्वाक्त साक्षाच्छ्रुतेर्गीः ।

यो वा एतेष्वेव तिष्ठत्यमुष्य
मोक्षोऽपि प्राकल्पिताद्देहवन्धात् ॥४६॥

46. Faith, devotion and the Yoga of meditation—these are mentioned by the Śrutis as the immediate factors of Liberation in the case of a seeker; whoever abides in these, gets Liberation from the bondage of the body, which is the conjuring of Ignorance.

[The reference is to Kaivalya Upanishad I. 2.

Faith—Shraddhā, *Devotion*—Bhakti. These have been defined in Ślokas 25 and 31, 32.

Bondage of the body—i. e. the identification of the Self with the body, which is solely due to Ignorance or Avidyā.]

अज्ञानयोगात्परमात्मनस्तव
ज्ञानात्मयन्धस्तत एव संसृतिः ।
तयोर्विधेकोदितयोधवद्भि-

रज्ञानकार्यं प्रदहेत्समूलम् ॥४७॥

47. It is verily through the touch of Ignorance that thou who art the Supreme Self, findest thyself under the bondage of non-Self, whence alone proceeds the round of births and deaths. The fire of knowledge, kindled by the discrimination between these two, burns up the effects of Ignorance together with their root.

शिष्य उवाच ।

कृपया श्रूयतां स्वामिन्प्रश्नोऽयं क्रियते मया
यदुत्तरमहं श्रुत्वा कृतार्थः स्यां भवन्मुखात् ॥४८॥

48. The disciple said: Condescend to listen, O Master, to the question I am putting (to thee); I shall be gratified to hear a reply to the same from thy lips.

को नाम बन्धः कथमेव आगतः

कथं प्रतिष्ठास्य कथं विमोक्षः ।

कोऽसावनात्मा परमः क सात्मा

तयोर्विवेकः कथमेतनुच्यताम् ॥४९॥

49. What is Bondage, forsooth? How has it come (upon the Self)? How does it continue to exist? How is one freed from it? Who is this non-Self? And who is the Supreme Self? And how can one discriminate between them?—Do tell me about all these.

श्रीगुरुवाच ।

धन्योऽसि कृतकृत्योऽसि पावितं ते कुलं त्वया ।
यदविद्याबन्धमुक्त्या ब्रह्मीभवितुमिच्छसि ॥५०॥

50. The Guru replied: Blessed art thou! Thou hast achieved thy life's end and hast sanctified thy family, that thou wishest to attain Brahmanhood by getting free from the bondage of Ignorance!

ऋणमोचनकर्तारः पितुः सन्ति सुतादयः ।

बन्धमोचनकर्ता तु स्वस्मादन्यो न कश्चन ॥५१॥

51. A father has got his sons and others to free him from his debts, but he has got none but himself to remove his bondage.

[In this and the next few Ślokas the necessity of direct realisation is emphasised as the only means of removing Ignorance.]

मस्तकन्यस्तभारादेर्दुःखमन्यैर्निवार्यते ।

श्लुधादिकृतदुःखं तु विना स्वेन न केनचित् ॥५२॥

52. The trouble such as that caused by a load on the head can be removed by others, but none but one's own self can put a stop to the pain which is caused by hunger and the like.

पथ्यमौषधसेवा च क्रियते येन रोगिणा ।
आरोग्यसिद्धिर्दृष्टास्य नान्यानुष्ठितकर्मणा ॥५३॥

53. 'The patient who takes (the proper) diet and medicine is alone seen to recover completely,—not through work done by others.

वस्तुस्वरूपं स्फुटबोधचक्षुषा ।
स्वेनैव वेद्यं न तु परिडतेन ।
चन्द्रस्वरूपं निजचक्षुषेव ।
ज्ञातव्यमन्यैरवगम्यते किम् ॥५४॥

54. The true nature of things is to be known *personally*, through the eye of clear illumination, and not through a sage:

what the moon exactly is, is to be known with one's own eyes; can others make him know it?

अविद्याकामकर्मादिपाशयन्त्रं विमोचिनुम ।
कः शक्नुयाद्विनात्मानं कल्पकादियतैरपि ॥५५॥

55. Who but one's own self can get rid of the bondage caused by the fetters of Ignorance, desire, action and the like, aye, even in a hundred crore of cycles?

[*Ignorance* of our real nature as the blissful Self leads to *desire*, which in its turn impels us to *action*, entailing countless sufferings.

Cycle—Kalpa, the entire duration of the evolved universe. See note on Sloka 6.]

(To be continued.)

THE EIGHTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

At the Belur Math.

THE eighty-third birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva came off on the 14th March last, when seven members of the Math were formally initiated into Sannyasa and two others into Brahmacharya. About 500 people were assembled on that day and were sumptuously fed. The public celebration took place on the 17th instant, when as usual, three steamships of Messrs. Hoare Miller & Co. plied between the Ahiritola Ghat and the Math. A big portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was installed under a huge canopy, on the Math ground, duly set between a very artistic arrangement of flowers, creepers etc. There were also the usual decorations all about the Math premises. There were distributions of Prasada, and cold drinks on a vast scale, and the men in charge, the volunteers and others were all attention to the guests of the day. The vast congregation amounted to nearly 50,000 people, of whom about 15,000 partook of the Prasada. There were songs, 'Kali-kirtan,' fire-works and many such other interesting items in the programme of the day. Concert and Sankirtan parties of the locality as well as from the metropolis had gathered in groups to pay their respects to the memory of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Deva.

At Ranchi.

The 83rd birthday anniversary was celebrated at Hinu on the 21st March, 1918, with the following programme:—

Sankirtan—6 p. m. to 8 p. m. (30th March).

Next day:— 1. Sankirtan in the morning. 2. Puja and Aratrika—at noon. 3. Distribution of Prasada—12 a. m. to 3 p. m. 4. Reading of Essays and Discourses on Religious subjects—4-6 p. m. 5. Kalikirtan—6-7 p. m.

At Sylhet.

The 83rd birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great pomp under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Seva Samiti. A public meeting presided over by the District Judge, Mr. H. C. Liddell, I. C. S. was held on the 11th March in the Town Hall, which was attended by the *elite* of the town, including officials. The reading of the annual report of the Samiti was followed by lectures on social service, and on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The President exhorted the audience to join the Samiti and wished it all success. On the 14th the Bhaktas performed the Tithi Puja. The public celebration came off on the 17th. There was Kirtan all through the day. In the morning the patients of the leper asylum were served with sweets under the direction

of the medical officer. In the evening about one thousand people including sweepers and other untouchables were fed.

At Benares.

The 83rd birthday was celebrated at the Rk. Advaita Ashrama on the 17th March when the following programme was observed :—

1. The feeding of Sadhus, at noon.
2. Sankirtan, 2-4 p. m.
3. A lecture in Hindi on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, by Babu Kali Prasanna Chatterji, late Editor, Tribune, 4-5 p. m.
4. Kali-kirtan with music, in the evening.
5. Distribution of Prasada among the assembled gentry, about 800 in number.

The *tithi-puja* had been performed on the 14th March with the usual ceremonies and entertainment of Bhaktas.

At Kankhal.

The 83rd birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by the Rk. Sevashrama on 17th March. The programme was as follows :—

1. Music by Sm. Satyabala Devi 9-11 a. m.
2. Lecture on the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa by Pandit Yogindra Chandra Sarma, Sankhya-Vedanta-tirtha, 11-12 p. m.
3. Serving Sadhu-Mahatmas with food, 12 a. m. to 2 p. m.
4. Bhajana 2-4 p. m.

At Kishenpur, Dehra Dun.

The 83rd birthday anniversary was celebrated on 17th March, at the Ramakrishna Ashrama. Many distinguished gentlemen from Dehra Dun attended the festival. After Puja and Bhajana there were religious discourses by Babu Buldeo Singh, Rai Saheb Ishan Ch. Dev, Mr. Chandi Prasad, M.A. B.L. and others. Prasada was distributed among the assembled Bhaktas, nearly a thousand in number.

At Lucknow.

The 83rd birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Rk. Sevashrama, Lucknow (18 Hewett Road), on the 17th March, 1918. There was Nagar Sankirtan in the morning, which was followed by the feeding of some 1100 poor and infirm people. At about 6 p. m. under the presidency of the Hon'ble Pandit Gokaran Nath Misra, President of the Sevashrama, the general meeting was commenced with a prayer recited by the boys of the depressed class school attached to the Ashrama, after which songs were sung and the annual report was read. The president then distributed prizes to the deserving students of the

depressed class school. After some formal business, Mr. A. P. Sen, Bar-at-Law delivered a nice speech in Bengali on "Sevadharma." The president then in an eloquent speech in Hindi explained the meaning of the word "Seva" and the necessity of establishing institutions like the present one which was named after the great Maharshi, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva, whose life was an inspiration to all his followers.

At Madras.

The 83rd birthday of Bhagavan Ramakrishna was celebrated on March 17, at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, with great eclat. There was Bhajana in the morning and a large number of poor people were fed in the course of the day. In the afternoon a Harikatha was performed by Mr. Thathachariar B. A., of the Secretariat, who kept the enlightened audience spell-bound.

A public meeting was held at 5-30 p. m., when Mr. B. V. Kameswara Iyer of Puducota read a very interesting paper on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Professor K. Sundararama Iyer presided. The learned lecturer spoke as follows :—

Sri Ramakrishna was born of poor Brahman parents in a small village in Bengal, the youngest child of a family of three sons and two daughters. In his early years he picked up the elements of Puranas and Itihasas from strolling players who visited the village now and then. In 1853 a wealthy lady of Calcutta built a very fine temple on the banks of the Ganges at Dakshinesvar, about 4 miles to the north of Calcutta, the most important shrine in the temple being dedicated to Kali. The eldest brother of Sri Ramakrishna was appointed as the priest. A few months afterwards he fell ill and he requested Ramakrishna to take charge of the temple duties. For four or five years he continued as the Pujaka in the temple. Soon after he was temple priest, he became strange in his ways. After the regular forms of worship he would sit before the Kali for hours at a time singing praises to Her or talking to Her as if She were a living person. Sometimes he would weep for hours. The strange ways become more and more marked as days rolled on. Some thought that he was growing mad and others that he was turning out a true lover of God. His people thought that if he married and settled as a householder his madness would cease. He was taken to his native village and was wedded to a young girl. He

came back to Dakshinesvar and resumed his duties as temple priest. Instead of calming down he became more vagarious. Thenceforward he lived most of his life in the temple precincts roaming about and meditating. It was given out that his madness was the madness after God. His wife came to him some years later and finding that his thoughts were not earthly she likewise resolved to lead a life of celibacy, attending on him as her Guru. In 1875 Keshab Chandra Sen visited him and struck by his remarkable spiritual insight wrote a short account of him and his teaching. In 1879 Pratap Chandra Mozumdar wrote an account of Ramakrishna in the 'Theistic Quarterly Review.' Many became his disciples, the most noted among them being Narendra, the famous Vivekananda. Here in all this one found no notable achievement of any kind. An unlettered man living most of his life in the seclusion of a garden with no heroic exploits to chronicle or brilliant incidents to set off the even tenour of his life, neither a writer nor an orator, neither an erudite philosopher nor a preacher nor a statesman. What was there in him that had made his name famous throughout the civilised world? Did he work miracles? No. He often said, "Visit not the miracle mongers for they are stragglers from Truth." It was not the masses that accepted him as a Saint and an Avatara. It was the educated Bengalees who had drunk deep of Western thought and culture and who quoted Mill and Spencer. P. C. Mozumdar said of him, "He did not know a word of Sanskrit and it is doubtful whether he knew enough Bengali. . . . He never writes anything, seldom argues, he never attempts to instruct."

What then is the secret of such enchanting influence? His personality was inspiring. The purity of his thoughts and relations towards women was unique. It appeared that he was born superior to earthly temptations. His body shrank instinctively from the touch of coins. Sri Ramakrishna was simple as a child and often sang, "The fool sayeth to his heart he has done this, he has done that; he knows not that it is the Lord that has used him as an instrument for His mighty purposes." Ramakrishna's sayings were not systematised: they were thrown out on the impulse of the moment. Pratap Chandra Mozumdar wrote, "He unconsciously throws a flood of marvellous light upon the obscurest passages of the Pouranic

Shastras and brings out the fundamental principles of the popular Hindu faith with a philosophical clearness which contrasts itself with his simple and illiterate life. . . . If all his observations on men and things could be reproduced people might think that the days of prophecy, of primeval unlearned wisdom had returned."

The central note of his teachings was, "Let each man seek God after his own fashion." Ramakrishna's own particular leaning was towards the manifestation of Godhead as the Divine Mother. The one thing he insisted on was that every man should try and learn to love God. All aspects of God were useful, each according to the mental outfit of the aspirant to whom it appealed.

When the materialism of the 19th century Europe had come into this ancient land in the wake of Western Education, when the brilliancy of Western agnostic expositions and scientific achievements was dazzling the minds of Indian youths at the Universities, when the iconoclasm of Protestant Christianity, creeping into the life of the English educated Indians side by side with the ideas of Western thought and culture, was sapping the springs of national faith and threatening the extinction of the ancient rituals and observances as fetishes of a creed outworn, there was a need for a great soul to bear witness to the efficacy of old beliefs and practices to show to eyes that could see and brains that could think that out of the orthodox methods, out of even what was condemned as idolatry there could spring a soul that could reach through these very methods the highest condition of spiritual advancement that was possible for a man to reach on earth. And that soul was Sri Ramakrishna, born where the scepticism of the West was thickest and where had gathered the greatest scholars and writers of the land and the most eloquent preachers of new creeds.

The Chairman then gave a learned lecture on the bearings of Sri Ramakrishna's life on India's physical environments, race and Time-spirit.

The proceedings came to a close at about 8 p.m. with the distribution of Prasada.

At Bangalore.

The 83rd birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Rk. Ashrama, Basavangudi, Bangalore City, on 17th March, 1918.

Programme:—1. Arrival of Bhajana processions from the City and Cantonment at noon. 2. Bhajana

noon to 2 p. m. 3. Harikatha 2 to 5 p. m. 4. Lecture by Mr. V. C. Seshachariar, B. A. B. L., Vakil, High Court, Madras, on "Sri Ramakrishna's Religious Message to the World," in English and by Mr. A. R. Krishna Sastri B. A., Lecturer, Central College, Bangalore, on "Sri Ramakrishna, the Guru," in Kannada. 5. Mangalarati and distribution of Prasada.

At Nellore.

The birthday festival of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 3rd March under the auspices of Sri Saraswati Samajam, Mulapet, Nellore. Swami Sharvanandaji of the Madras Rk. Mission was invited on the occasion. Sri Ramakrishna's portrait was taken in procession through the streets amid joyous shouts, after which a Telugu paper was read on Sri Ramakrishna's Life and Teachings and Puja was performed and Prasada distributed among the Bhaktas. At 5-30 p. m. a public meeting was held at the Town Hall presided over by Mr. Sundaram Chettiar Avl. B. A. B. L., Sub Judge of Nellore, in which Swami Sharvanandaji charmed the audience with his interesting lecture on the Significance of Sri Ramakrishna's Life. Then the Chairman gave a short concluding address.

At Cuddapah.

The members of Sri Ramakrishna Samaj celebrated the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna on the 14th March. A public meeting was held at 6 p. m. when Mr. S. Ramakrishnaiya, the Joint Secretary of the Samaj, read a paper on "Sri Ramakrishna, the Ideal of Modern India," in which he eulogised the ideal of Brahmacharya and pointed out other prominent characteristics of the Paramahansa, such as, sincerity, perseverance, ideal of service, and religious toleration and called on the younger generation to practise these virtues in life. The lecture was followed by Bhajana and distribution of Prasada.

The 33rd Birthday of the Bhagavan was also duly celebrated at the Rk. Sevashramas at Brindaban and Allahabad, at the Rk. Ashrama, Sargachi (Murshidabad), at the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, at the Rk. Mission, Dacca Branch, at the Rk. Archanalaya, Entally, Calcutta, and at other places by his followers and admirers.

NEWS AND NOTES.

WE heartily welcome the publication of the neat little volume of Chicago Addresses of the Swami Vivekananda, translated into Hindi—addresses that first introduced the 'Cyclonic Hindu' to the modern civilised world. The Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Luxa, Benares City has done a service to the Hindi-speaking public by bringing out this highly popular work of Swamiji. The book is priced at 4 as., and can be had at the above address. We wish the book a wide circulation.

THE 56th birthday of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on Feb. 10 at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, with great eclat. In the morning after the usual Bhajana and Puja several Brahmins and non-Brahmins were fed at the Math besides a number of poor people at the Mylapore market. In the afternoon a Kalakshepam was performed and the public meeting came off at 5-30 in the evening, which was presided over by Dewan Bahadur M. O. Parthasarathy Aiyangar.

Mr. A. Krishnaswami Aiyar delivered an interesting and instructive lecture on "Swami Vivekananda and Modern India." He said in the course of his lecture :

There are three notes in the life and teachings of Swamiji which appeal to us more than any others. First, each nation has a destiny to fulfil, a message to deliver, a mission to accomplish. The glorious destiny of India is to regenerate man the brute into man the God. India has to spread the gospel of real strength and the gospel of renunciation enunciated in the Upanishads.

The second note in his teaching is the essential unity of the Hindu Religion. If the question is put to us wherein lies the unity of Hinduism, the answer is furnished by the Swamiji in this way, "All Hindus believe the Vedas to be the eternal teachings of the secrets of religion. All Hindus believe in a marvellous infinite power as the source of human energy. Unlike the other races of the world, we believe in a continuous evolution. Lastly, we all hold in India that the soul is by its nature pure and perfect and infinite in power and blessed."

The third note in the teaching of the Swamiji is

that religion is not a mere matter for the recluse. Religion ought to be dynamic, not static, it ought to be positive and not negative.

No one was more righteously indignant than the Swamiji at the lot of our poor fellow countrymen. The Swamiji's wrath knew no bounds when he thought of this—that the poor Pariah is not allowed to go through the same street as the high caste man. But if he changed his name to an English one it was all right! "How to elevate the masses?" says he. "It is by education and education alone." Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brains and runs riot there undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. We must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands. It must be on national lines through national methods as far as it is practicable.

The Swamiji could not contemplate the possibility of the development of Indian manhood without the co-operation of Indian womanhood. He always appealed to the idea of a glorious mother. He always referred to India more as the India of Sita, Savitri and Damayanti than as the India of Sri Ramachandra, of Manu and Mandhata. He would send out Indian women for the spiritual conquest of England and America.

The Chairman, in his remarks observed that according to the teachings of the Swamiji, there must be a spirit of Vedantism pervading all our life, and it was only by the spirit of renunciation, a man would attain the highest nobility of the soul. Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer and the Chairman.

In connection with the fifty-sixth Birthday Anniversay of Swami Vivekananda, an interesting lecture was delivered in the Mandayam Association, Mysore, by Mr. R. Sadasiva Iyer, M. A., Tutor, University of Mysore, on "The Place of Swami Vivekananda in the Modern Indian Renaissance," Sunday, the 10th Feb. Dr. Radhakumud Mookerjee, M. A., Ph. D., P. R. S., Professor, University of Mysore, presided on the occasion. The lecturer spoke as follows:—

We are now at the dawn of a new awakening in India. Swami Vivekananda's life touches different

sides of modern life. He was a born educator who dreamt of an ideal national university representing Eastern and Western culture and breathing the spirit of the old Gurukula; and he proclaimed also the vital necessity of mass education in our national life. But education was only one of the sides of social reform that he advocated. His great cry was 'bread before metaphysics,' and in his Ramakrishna Math—the home of Sannyasins and the temple of learning, he instituted the great feeding hall of the poor. His ardent interest in social reform was only the active expression of the patriot soul in him that made him dwell fondly on India's historical memories and natural scenery in all his wanderings in the West. From the sage's point of view, patriotism may be regarded as a mark of immaturity. The Swami had the celestial weakness of patriotism, partly because he believed that every nation must preserve its individuality so that the world might show a mosaic of nationalities, each with its characteristic life-design. India had her own distinctive gift to offer to the world and Vivekananda felt himself as its custodian and dispenser to the West. But no less strong in him was the universal human note he struck in his teaching. He was a true citizen of the world. As a religious teacher he synthesised the different schools of Indian philosophy, showed their unity and interpreted them on a rational basis. He laid emphasis on social action as well as inner realisations. For him all this was but the training for the Hindu Missionary movement in India and abroad. He wanted to nerve the spirit of Hinduism and make it aggressive enough to capture the heart of the West to the philosophy of the East. Indeed his greatest mission was to combine the best spirit of the West with that of the East, and so he insisted on strength and manliness as the supreme need of our national life. He was the first to preach the modern ethics of doing and suffering; and he showed that the soul should be realised through flesh and nature and not by crushing them, which was the burden of Browning's teaching. Vivekananda's mission in India was two-fold like Buddha's, whose gospel roused the arts, philosophy and literature of China and Japan, while it democratised the Aryan culture throughout the land. The Swami extended further the mission of Buddha by introducing Indian

philosophy into Western countries, and quickening the spirituality of his own land. He indeed comes in the wake of the great saints, Sankara and Ramanuja, who wanted us to extend the hand of brotherhood to the lowest Pariah. The memories of the sages and saints of a land are its priceless treasures, the epitome of all that is best and noblest in the land. "Great men are the fire-pillars in the dark pilgrimage of mankind; they are the heavenly signs, ever living witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, embodied possibilities of human nature," and it behoves us all who stand at the threshold of a great movement to cherish the memory of one of India's greatest saints and patriots, Swami Vivekananda whose spirit is in the hall to-day and awakens us to a new vision of life.

The President, amid loud applause, spoke to the following effect :—

The authorities of the Association have done well in celebrating the birthday of the Swami rather than the day of his passing to rest. For the great Swami is not dead but still lives in the hearts of his innumerable disciples and admirers. He has fulfilled the law of the mission of great men to the world. History demonstrates that whenever the world passes through a crisis the great man appears on the scene, and by his life and message guides the world forward in the path of progress. Sri Ramachandra, Buddha, Christ and Mahomet have all appeared in connection with some critical epoch in the history of mankind. Just in the same way, in the history of modern India, when Bengal was on the point of being denationalised and materialistic, there came to the rescue of Hinduism a great Avatara, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Ramakrishna who was in need of an instrument for the adequate fulfilment of his mission found one admirably suited to his purpose in young Narendra, who was at the time an ordinary graduate of the Calcutta University. Narendra, who in general resembled the normal graduate of his time, was yet distinguished in this—that instead of remaining satisfied with the transient pleasures of the physical life, he was yearning to realise the inner life culminating in Samadhi. No better proof of his fitness for the task of his life can be found than the choice he made when he was faced by two such alternatives as the call of

his master to the life of the spirit on the one hand and on the other, the inclination to remain at home to protect his starving mother. The main element of the great Swami's teaching is the emphasis he laid on the cultivation of what may be called the 'double life' in every man—the inner spiritual life and the outer physical life which it is impossible to avoid. These two aspects of life, though appearing antagonistic, are in reality complementary. No man should be content with the cultivation of only the physical life for it would mean our extinction with the extinction of the body. It is only the soul that is eternal and only the life of the soul can make us immortal. What is wanted for this is not the neglect but a proper control of the physical life, which will then serve as a means for the development of the spiritual life by the dedication of our external activities to the service of our fellow beings.

UNDER the auspices of the Theosophical Society, Srinagar, the 56th birthday anniversary of Sri Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at Sathu, Srinagar on the 3rd February, 1918. Under the presidency of Dr. Balwant Sing, L. M. S., a meeting was held, in which Pandit Sreekanth Toshikhana and Pandit Shanker Kaul read their papers in English on "Swami Vivekananda—the Man and his Message," and Pandit Jialal Kaul a paper in Urdu on "The Life-sketch of Swami Vivekananda" which was much appreciated. Professor Nityananda Shastri said that Swami Vivekananda had a mind to start a Sevashrama and a Sanskrit College in Kashmir. The meeting terminated with the distribution of Prasada. The feeding of children was a noticeable feature of the occasion.

THE birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Chaitanya and Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by the residents of Kushtia (Nadia Dt.) on the 27th March, 1918. There was Nagarkirtan in the morning. At noon, food was offered to the Lord and the assembled Bhaktas and poor Narayanas were served with the Prasada. Bhajan and religious discourse took place in the afternoon which were followed by Arati and the chanting of hymns and Sankirtan in the evening.
